

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 17 July 2019

Present:

Councillor Stone – in the Chair

Councillors Alijah, Cooley, T Judge, Kilpatrick, Lovecy, McHale, Reeves, Reid, Sadler and Wilson

Co-opted Voting Members:

Dr W Omara, Parent Governor Representative

Ms Z Stepan, Parent Governor Representative

Co-opted Non Voting Members:

Mr L Duffy, Secondary Sector Teacher Representative

Councillor N Murphy, Deputy Leader

Councillor Bridges, Executive Member for Children and Schools

Apologies:

Councillors Sameem Ali and Hewitson

Mr A Arogundade, Parent Governor Representative

Mrs J Miles, Representative of the Diocese of Salford

CYP/19/26 Minutes

Decision

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2019.

CYP/19/27 Update on the Youth Justice Service

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director of Children and Education Services which focused on the work and progress that had been made against the action plan arising from the Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) Inspection of Manchester's Youth Justice Service undertaken in November 2018.

Officers referred to the main points and themes within the report which included:

- Progress on the HMIP Action Plan;
- An update on Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) in Youth Justice;
- Review of the Youth Justice Service; and
- Quality of Practice.

Some of the key points and themes that arose from the Committee's discussions were:

- To welcome the report and note that it would be useful to receive anonymised case studies;

- What provision there was for children with mental health issues;
- Of the 61 children known to Youth Justice who had an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) how many already had this in place before they entered the Youth Justice system;
- That Unconscious Bias training should be extended to all the staff, not just the Case Managers, and also to other organisations involved in Youth Justice such as Greater Manchester Police (GMP);
- What was happening at a Greater Manchester and wider level in this area; and
- To request to visit the Youth Justice Service at one of its current premises.

The Head of Youth Justice informed Members that there were three Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) workers embedded in the Youth Justice Service who worked alongside the Case Managers and all cases where a child had or was suspected to have mental health issues were referred to them. She reported that more children were now entering the Youth Justice system with an EHCP already in place and that she could provide the figures on this after the meeting.

The Head of Youth Justice reported that, after a small number of staff had attended Unconscious Bias training and provided positive feedback on it, it had been agreed to roll this out to all Case Managers; however, she agreed that it should be rolled out to all staff. The Deputy Leader advised Members that he would raise the issue of addressing unconscious bias with GMP. He informed Members that conversations were taking place with the Department of Justice on devolution of some areas of the justice system and he suggested that the Committee could look at this and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA)'s role in relation to Youth Justice in a future report.

Decisions

1. To request an update report in 12 months' time to include information on the issues that Members have raised at today's meeting, including children with SEND and Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) children in the Youth Justice system and for this report to include anonymised case studies.
2. To note that the Head of Youth Justice will provide the figures on how many of the children in the Youth Justice system with an EHCP had one at the time they entered the Youth Justice system.
3. To arrange a visit for Members of the Committee to one of Youth Justice Services' premises.

CYP/19/28 Raising Standards of Practice in Children's Social Care

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director of Children and Education Services which provided an overview of the work undertaken in regards to raising standards of practice in Children's Social Care.

Officers referred to the main points and themes within the report which included:

- Recruitment and retention of social work staff;

- The use of the Signs of Safety model across Children's Services;
- Learning and development;
- The Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement Framework; and
- Priorities for the year ahead.

Some of the key points and themes that arose from the Committee's discussions were:

- To recognise the progress made in recent years;
- Retention rates, including longer-term retention rates for those who had entered social work through a variety of methods such as the Frontline programme;
- Whether the social prescribing model could be used in Children's Services; and
- Request for information on the size of social work caseloads and the timeliness of allocation and assessments.

The Strategic Lead for Safeguarding and Practice Improvement reported that about 50% of the people who had undertaken the Step Up to Social Work course in Manchester stayed on as social workers for Manchester City Council and there was a range of reasons why the others did not, including that they returned to their home towns and pursued their social work careers there. The Strategic Director of Children and Education Services reported that the Council was now in a reasonably strong position in terms of the stability of its social work workforce. He advised Members that, while some turnover was natural, it was important to keep people in the profession as experience was critical.

The Executive Member for Children and Schools advised Members that, although social prescribing was primarily related to adult health services, there were similarities with the approach being taken to delivering children's services in a locality, which involved working with health and other partners and looking holistically at a family's circumstances.

The Strategic Director of Children and Education Services reported that information on caseloads was included in the proxy indicator reports which were submitted to the Committee on a quarterly basis. He informed Members that social work staff in their first year of practice were allocated approximately 15 children and that qualified social workers had an average caseload of approximately 17.3. He outlined how caseloads levels and the timeliness of allocation and assessment were monitored by senior managers within Children's Services, while emphasising that the service was now focusing on quality of practice, not just on compliance. The Strategic Lead for Safeguarding and Practice Improvement advised Members that the complexity of cases, not just the number allocated to each social worker, was important.

Decision

To note that the Committee will continue to monitor the issues discussed through future reports.

CYP/19/29 Delivering Children's Services in a Locality

The Committee received a presentation of the Strategic Director of Children and Education Services which provided an overview of the delivery of Children's Services through a locality approach.

Officers referred to the main points and themes within the presentation which included:

- The Children's Locality Model;
- The underpinning principles;
- The intended outcomes and impacts;
- Locality leadership;
- The programme outline;
- Workstreams and milestones;
- The emerging impact;
- Upcoming priorities; and
- Challenges.

Some of the key points and themes that arose from the Committee's discussions were:

- Request for examples of how locality working in partnership with other agencies, such as health services, could address a range of issues, such as Foetal Alcohol Syndrome and safely preventing children from becoming looked after by the local authority;
- Recognising that locality boundaries were not a straight-forward issue, for example, because children attending a school within a particular locality could live within other neighbouring localities and how this was being addressed;
- That the findings from the Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Challenge on Child Sexual Exploitation, which were appended in full to the Overview Report, were encouraging, while recognising that they also identified areas for further development;
- To ask for further information on the implementation of the new social care ICT system, Liquid Logic; and
- To request that the presentation slides be shared with all Elected Members along with a covering note, explaining the context.

The Strategic Director of Children and Education Services informed Members about the role health services, such as midwifery, could play in enabling the identification of issues and intervention at the earliest stage. He cited a current initiative relating to pregnant women who had had a number of children removed from their care in the past, identifying at the earliest stage that there was a potential risk of this happening again and starting to work with the mother as early as possible to reduce the risk of the new baby needing to be taken into care.

The Executive Member for Children and Schools emphasised that boundaries were porous, as families could live in one area while accessing services across boundary

lines, and what was important was that families received the right support for them in the most appropriate place, which could be through a school or a GP's surgery.

The Strategic Director of Children and Education Services reported that all Elected Members would be briefed on the new ICT system. He informed Members that information was being migrated to the new system and that from 22 July 2019 the new system would be live.

The Executive Member for Children and Schools reported that, following a session for all Elected Members on corporate parenting and Regulation 44 visitors, some Members had requested a session on wider children's services issues. He suggested that, when the presentation slides were shared with all Elected Members, information on this session could also be included.

Decision

To request that the presentation slides be shared with all Elected Members, along with a covering note explaining the context, and that information on the session on children's services for all Members also be included.

CYP/19/30 Delivering the Our Manchester Strategy

The Committee received a report of the Executive Member for Children and Schools which provided an overview of work undertaken and progress towards the delivery of the Council's priorities as set out in the Our Manchester Strategy for those areas within his portfolio.

The main points and themes within the report included:

- The Council's Children's Services workforce;
- Leaving Care Service;
- Improvements in Children's Services;
- Promoting Inclusion and Preventing Exclusion;
- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND);
- Poverty and homelessness;
- Serious youth violence; and
- The budget.

Some of the key points and themes that arose from the Committee's discussions were:

- The transition from children's health services to adult health services, particularly for vulnerable young people; and
- What progress had been made following the Council motion to end intentional homelessness for care-experienced young people.

The Chair reported that he had discussed the transition from children's to adult health services, particularly in relation to mental health services, with the Chair of the Health Scrutiny Committee, which was planning to scrutinise this area. The Executive Member for Children and Schools acknowledged that young people aged 18 and

over could still be vulnerable, for example, if they had health issues or were at risk of criminal or sexual exploitation and emphasised the importance of working with partner organisations and adult social services to address these issues. He informed Members that the Council already had practices in place so that care-experienced young people were not classed as intentionally homeless and denied support; however, he reported that the motion was important in establishing this as an explicit Council policy.

Decision

To thank the Executive Member for Children and Schools for his report.

CYP/19/31 Overview Report

A report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit was submitted. The overview report contained key decisions within the Committee's remit, responses to previous recommendations and the Committee's work programme, which the Committee was asked to approve.

The Chair commented on the motion which had been agreed at the Full Council meeting on 10 July 2019, declaring a Climate Emergency, and informed Members that he would be discussing with officers in Children's Services how they would take this forward.

Decision

To note the report and agree the work programme.